

# MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

The inclusion of LGBTQ+  
health needs and concerns  
within nursing and midwifery  
pre-registration programmes



## OPENING THE DOOR TO INCLUSION REPORT 2024



LGBTQ+ HEALTH NETWORK for Nursing and Midwifery Academics



Edinburgh Napier  
UNIVERSITY





## BACKGROUND

Despite their legal right to access healthcare many LGBTQ+ people are reluctant to utilise services and access the support they require due to fear of discrimination, stigma and negative past experiences (Karakaya and Kutlu, 2021; Bonvicini, 2017). Additionally, many LGBTQ+ people experience significant health inequalities and barriers when accessing healthcare and support (Royal College of Nursing, 2017; Stonewall, 2017). Therefore, it is important that health professionals are aware of the distinct needs of LGBTQ+ people and respond to their individual needs (Qureshi et al., 2018). The situation is now further compounded by the need for LGBTQ+ people to access healthcare services due to COVID-19 global pandemic leading to psychosocial concerns and loneliness (Gorczynsky and Fasoli, 2020; Salerno et al., 2020).

Evidence highlights that many health professionals have received limited education during their initial preparation regarding the needs of LGBTQ+ people (McCarty-Caplan, 2018; Sekoni et al., 2017; Lim et al., 2015). As a result, many lack knowledge, skills and confidence when encountering LGBTQ+ patients (McCann et al., 2021; McEwing, 2020; Lim et al., 2015). From the perspective of nursing and midwifery pre-registration programmes, there is a limited focus on the needs of LGBTQ+ people, with developments required to address the situation (Brown et al., 2021a; Brown et al., 2021b; Cooper et al., 2018; McCann & Brown 2018). This needs to be addressed as nurses and midwives form the largest group of health professionals, with scope to impact upon the healthcare experience of LGBTQ+ people (Brown et al., 2021a; McCann & Brown, 2020).

A one-year research project, funded by The Burdett Trust for Nursing, was undertaken in 2020-2021 across Schools of Nursing and Midwifery in the UK and Ireland (Brown et al., 2021b). The aim was to identify current education content within nursing and midwifery pre-registration programmes regarding LGBTQ+ health (Brown et al., 2021b). The findings showed that while some academics are attempting to include LGBTQ+ health within programmes, many lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively develop the subject area. Based on the available literature, findings, and recommendations a Best Education Practice Guide regarding LGBTQ+ health within nursing and midwifery pre-registration programmes was developed (Brown et al., 2021b). The Guide drew together LGBTQ+ resources to assist academics to improve delivery of LGBTQ+ health, for example curriculum activities and actions required to increase inclusivity, and academic literature.

One of the study recommendations is the need to develop a LGBTQ+ health network to support academics in the delivery of LGBTQ+ health in nursing and midwifery pre-registration curriculum, with the potential for development to include other disciplines. The Burdett Trust for Nursing and Queen's University Belfast provided funding for one year to establish a new network for nursing and midwifery academics and key LGBTQ+ stakeholders to share best education practice that embeds LGBTQ+ health within programmes.

## PURPOSE & SCOPE

The LGBTQ+ Health Network for Nursing and Midwifery Academics (hereafter referred to as 'the network') is a collaborative group of nursing and midwifery academics associated with Universities and NHS/HSC Trusts, across the United Kingdom and Ireland, coming together to share good practice to improve the inclusion of LGBTQ+ health in the nursing and midwifery education and health service CPD programmes.

Information and outputs are shared freely and within the spirit of collaborative working both within the network and more widely.

## OBJECTIVES

The network aims to ultimately develop the knowledge and skills of nursing and midwifery students, health professionals and academics by:

- **Providing an opportunity for nursing and midwifery academics and health service practitioners developing and delivering CPD across the United Kingdom and Ireland and other key stakeholders to participate in the network.**
- **Creating an online network portal for LGBTQ+ health resources accessible to nursing and midwifery academics and health service practitioners developing and delivering CPD.**

## NETWORK STRUCTURE

### COORDINATION TEAM

**Professor Michael Brown:** Network Lead, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, Queen's University Belfast

**Professor Caroline Hollins Martin:** Network Lead, Maternal Health, Edinburgh Napier University

**Professor Mark Linden:** Network Lead, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, Queen's University Belfast

**Dr Freda McCormick:** Research Fellow, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, Queen's University Belfast

### THE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

A Project Advisory Group (PAG) has been established to provide expert advice and guidance to the network Coordination Team. The PAG meets online via Microsoft Teams on a quarterly basis.

**Dr Fidelindo Lim:** Clinical Associate Professor, New York University Rory Meyers College of Nursing, New York City

**Wendy Irwin:** Equalities Lead, Royal College of Nursing, London

**Professor Brian Webster-Henderson:** Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Cumbria. Chair of the Council of Deans of Health UK

**Aisling Dolan:** Operations Manager, Trans Equality Network Ireland (TENI)

**Collette O'Regan:** LGBT Ireland

**Karen Murray:** Director Northern Ireland, The Royal College of Midwives

**Dr Janine Stockdale:** Lead Midwife for Education/Senior Lecturer in Midwifery (Education), School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University Belfast

**Dr Geraldine McLoughlin:** BSc (Hons) Midwifery Programme Co-Ordinator Midwife Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Cork

**Liz Skelcher:** Northern Ireland Programmes Manager, Stonewall

**Jessica Black:** Trans Healthcare Action, Dublin

### MEMBERS

Participants are identified and invited to join the network. The network involves members, and there is no fee for membership. To become a member a 'LGBTQ+ Health Network Microsoft Form' is completed providing consent for details provided to be used for network activities.

Members include academics delivering LGBTQ+ health in nursing and midwifery pre-registration programmes, representatives from NHS/HSC Trusts developing and delivering CPD, non-governmental organisations, and others, across the UK and Ireland. Membership has increased from 42 in June 2023 to 84 in June 2024 with a total of 31 Universities, 6 NHS/HSC Trusts, and 3 other organisations represented.

### Roles include:

- **Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Reader, Professor**
- **Associate Dean, Deputy/Head of Department, Director**
- **Clinical Educator, Practice Education Facilitator/Lead, Staff Nurse**
- **PhD Candidate**

A member may withdraw from the network at any time. Over the year two members asked to be removed.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Coordination Team decide on network management, coordination, and membership requirements.

The Research Fellow serves as the support for receiving membership applications, maintaining contact lists, and distribution of agenda for the network meetings, and issues notices from the network and any other support activities deemed necessary.

Each member is expected to contribute substantially to the work of the network by participating in the Network's meetings and initiatives.



# NETWORK MEETINGS

The Network met via Microsoft Teams on eight occasions for up to 90 minutes during the first year. There was an average attendance of 15 at each meeting (Table 1).

## ATTENDANCE

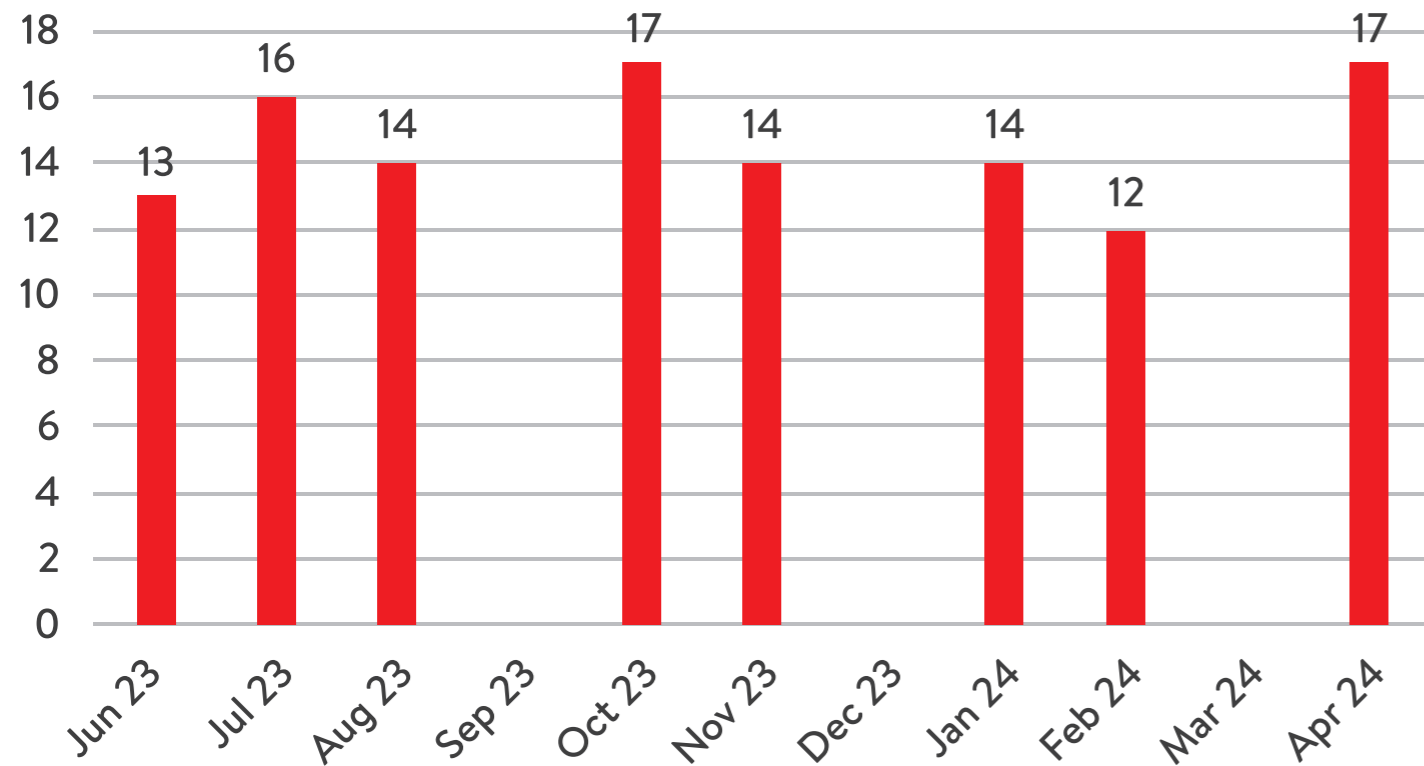


Table 1: Attendance at Network Meetings



An agenda was distributed in advance of each meeting which provided opportunities for members to present and discuss various topics, and share knowledge and experience.

'Talking Point' included LGBTQ+ health skills simulation, and assessing LGBTQ+ health in the curriculum. These items evoked energetic discussions about the current work of academics, with some 'light bulb moments' occurring.

The following topics were presented by members:

### Case scenario for a non-binary couple in pregnancy

Dr Anita Byrne,  
Senior Lecturer/Programme Director in Midwifery,  
Dundalk Institute of Technology

### Assessing/Evaluating (student) Clinicians

Ella Guerin,  
Assistant Professor of Mental Health Nursing,  
Nottingham University

### Honour Based Abuse

Asma Ashraf,  
Lecturer in Adult Nursing,  
City, University of London

### Embedding LGBTQIA+ inclusive content into the second year Additional Care module

Bunty Lai-Boyd,  
Senior Lecturer, Midwifery,  
University of Worcester

### An LGBTQI+ Inclusion in Healthcare elective module for 4th year nurses and midwives: a summary

Ryan Goulding,  
Lecturer, Mental Health Nursing,  
University College Cork

"This has been the most inspiring 45 minutes! It strikes me that there is potential here for the network to develop some training/teaching materials. It's really useful and I hope I can bring something to the network in the future".

### Esther Readshaw,

Programme Director Child Nursing,  
School of Health and Psychological Sciences,  
City, University of London

"Thank you for facilitating my sharing of learning and teaching resources. I'm really looking forward to hearing about other people's ideas and approaches".

### Dr Anita Byrne,

Senior Lecturer/Programme Director in Midwifery,  
School of Health and Science,  
Dundalk Institute of Technology



## OTHER NETWORK ACTIVITIES

An in-person LGBTQ+ Health Network Workshop was held in Queen's University Belfast in December 2023 with a total of seven members in attendance. Future direction and strategy for the network was discussed.

A Microsoft Teams network portal for communication, collaboration, knowledge management, information sharing and dissemination has been developed and accessible to all members.

The network held its inaugural conference on Monday 20th May 2024. This all-day online event attracted attendance from Universities, Healthcare Trusts and other organisations, across the UK, Ireland and New York. There was a total of 119 registrations with 87 subsequently attending.

The theme of the conference was 'Creating Inclusive LGBTQ+ Health in the Nursing and Midwifery Curriculum'. The focus was on evidence-based research and how best to develop and incorporate LGBTQ+ health learning and assessment into the curriculum.

A varied programme was offered with contributions from NGOs and network members:

### **How to Integrate LGBTQ+ Health in the Curriculum**

*Focus on how nurse educators can seamlessly integrate LGBTQ+ health topics and scenarios in existing nursing courses.*

Dr Fidel Lim,  
Clinical Associate Professor,  
New York University Meyers College of Nursing

### **Transgender Healthcare and Moral Panics**

Jessica Black,  
Researcher, Trans Healthcare Action, Ireland

### **Families as Pillars: Exploring the Impact of Family Support on the Mental Health and Well-being of Trans and Gender Diverse Youth**

Dr Beth Jones,  
Senior Lecturer in Psychology,  
Nottingham Trent University

### **Meeting the Challenge of Inclusive Language in Maternity Care**

Gail Anderson,  
Senior Lecturer (Education) Midwifery,  
Queen's University Belfast

### **An Overview of Asexual Self Identity**

Dr Catriona Jones,  
Midwifery Lecturer,  
University of York


### **LGBTQ+ Inclusive Case Study**

Ella Guerin,  
Assistant Professor,  
University of Nottingham

*"It was a great day with a great range of speakers from different professions presenting ideas from all different angles! It's great to get together with this network regardless, and I learnt a lot".*

*"The presentations were outstanding and have left me with much to reflect on and share with colleagues. Also, being able to gain perspectives of those attending today via the chat was also very useful".*

*"The event gave me new insights of the topic and also provoke things that I need to reflect on especially on how to adapt it to my teaching".*



“... The presentations were outstanding and have left me with much to reflect on and share with colleagues ...”

## NETWORK IMPACT

The impact of the LGBTQ+ health network is measured by the number of:

- Nursing and midwifery academics joining the network and attendance at network meetings.
- Institutions represented in the network.

Feedback from members on what they like most about the network includes:

“Speaking with like-minded colleagues from across the UK and Ireland; this is great for professional support and development but also as a supportive community of practice given some of the challenges facing LGBTQ+ people at the moment”.

“Friendly and informal, which encourages me to think about my own LGBTQ+ understanding and apply it to my work”.

“An opportunity to network with other healthcare professionals and to share a good practice”.



## REFLECTION

The network has provided a forum for nursing and midwifery academics, and others, to share best education practice that embeds LGBTQ+ health within nursing and midwifery programmes. It is considered a ‘safe space’ enabling the members to engage in professional academic conversations and knowledge exchange regarding the delivery of LGBTQ+ health within nursing and midwifery education programmes. The availability of online resources has proved invaluable to many members, providing inspiration and assisting with development and delivery of LGBTQ+ education within nursing and midwifery education.

## GOING FORWARD

1. Deliver an annual online conference for network members to showcase education practice and innovation regarding LGBTQ+ health within nursing and midwifery programmes.
2. Continue to grow and evolve network membership across schools of nursing and midwifery in the UK and Ireland.
3. Explore funding to continue and develop the academic network in the future.



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